

The Delta Social Science Task Force

Background/Purpose

In the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta (Delta) region, the importance of social science and of integrating social and natural sciences is widely accepted but examples of this integration are lacking. In response to this disparity and the Delta Independent Science Board's review of research on the Delta as an Evolving Place, the Delta Science Program is coordinating a Social Science Task Force (SSTF).

Charge to the Social Science Task Force

The role of the SSTF is to develop a strategy document containing recommendations that can be acted upon by the Delta science enterprise¹ to nurture social science research and strengthen its integration with the natural sciences.

Objectives of the strategy to be developed by the SSTF are to:

- 1) Identify opportunities to strengthen the Delta science enterprise, to improve the integration of social sciences into the science, management, and policy institutions that address Delta issues, and to improve social science integration into decision-making about the Delta
- 2) Identify critical steps and priorities for establishing a social science research program that enhances our understanding of the values of an evolving Delta to both people and the environment.

Questions to be considered by the SSTF include:

- 1) How can the Delta science enterprise increase support for social science research?
 - a. How can we marshal additional funding and promote increased budget allocations for social science research in the Delta?
 - b. What are the critical steps needed to establish a social science research program in the Delta?
 - c. How can we better encourage social scientists to conduct research in the Delta?
- 2) What are priority social science topic areas that need to be supported?
 - a. What types of data can be used to address complex social science questions?
- 3) How can social and natural sciences be better integrated to address complex questions in the Delta?

¹ The term 'Science Enterprise' refers to the collection of science programs and activities that exist to serve managers and stakeholders in a regional system (Delta Science Plan 2018)

- a. What are human responses to natural resource management actions?
 - b. How can social science inform balancing limited resources among humans and wildlife?
 - c. What value-based tradeoffs exist among alternative actions?
- 4) How can knowledge generated from social science studies be utilized to support decision-making in the Delta?
 - a. How can social science inform policy decisions that are effective and cognizant of the values of a changing Delta?
 - b. How can social science help integrate natural science into decision-making?
- 5) How can social science inform the design of improved and more effective stakeholder processes in the Delta?

In order to meet the objectives and develop a useful strategy document, SSTF members will work individually and collaboratively to achieve the following tasks:

- Participate in two or more teleconference meetings with the Delta Science Program.
- Participate in a two-day, in-person meeting with key interest groups meeting in or near Sacramento, CA.
- SSTF Chair and/or identified member(s) participate in one or more follow-up meetings with key interest groups organized by the Delta Science Program to present and receive feedback on the SSTF's initial recommendations and the draft strategy report.
- Read and review materials specified in the Charge
- SSTF members jointly author a report that addresses the objectives and questions outlined in the Charge to the SSTF. The report shall provide findings, recommendations, and a strategy for improving social sciences integration in the Delta science enterprise.
- SSTF members jointly prepare up to two presentations of the SSTF's final report to councils, committees, or interested groups at the request of the Delta Science Program.
- Chair, Lead Author, and Member roles are explicitly defined in the SSTF Standard Agreement

Committee Composition

The SSTF consists of six to eight social science experts. The Delta Lead Scientist will select members that collectively represent a broad mix of social science expertise based on input from the SSTF Chair, Delta Science Program staff, and others. The SSTF will be patterned on successful efforts of the Social Science Review Working Group of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Science Advisory Board.

Members of the SSTF represent their scientific disciplines and community. They do not represent or speak on behalf of an agency or professional organization.

Term

The SSTF will carry out its review within an 18-month period. The majority of work is likely to occur between January and December 2019.

Rough timeline for SSTF participation

2018

- December/January 2019: SSTF kickoff meeting with DSP (virtual meeting)

2019

- January: Two-day Meeting (Sacramento and Davis)
 - Day 1: Public meeting and SSTF launch in Sacramento – exchanges between the SSTF and managers/directors, key interest group committee members, and regional experts
 - Day 2: SSTF closed session at UC Davis – initiate report writing
- July: Two-day Meeting
 - Day 1: SSTF participates in a CMSI/DSP symposium at UC Davis
 - Day 2: SSTF closed session at UC Davis – work on strategy report
- December: Draft strategy report
- March: Final strategy report

Materials to Review

Required Reading (explains the current issue with limited social science in the Delta and challenges of social-natural science integration)

- [NOAA Social Science Review Working Group Final Report \(2009\)](#)
- [ISB Report – Review of Research on the Delta as an Evolving Place](#)
- [Science Enterprise Workshop \(Executive Summary\)](#)

Supplemental Reading (Delta background and example social science projects)

- [Delta Narratives Project](#)
- Documents listed in the [ISB review of Delta as an Evolving Place](#)
- [Science Enterprise Workshop \(Selections from proceedings, pp. 101-107\)](#)
- [Delta Dialogues](#)
- [Science Action Agenda](#)
- Updated Draft [Delta Science Plan](#)
- [Beginner's Guide to the Delta](#)
- [Early reclamation and abandonment of the central Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta](#)
- [Defining and Contesting Environmental Justice: Socio-natures and the Politics of Scale in the Delta](#)
- [Delta Reclamation District Financing and Budgets](#)
- [Delta Regional Opportunity Analysis](#)